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ABSTRACT

This study reports the perspectives of the 12 Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Fellows regarding the 1985-86 MAT program at Memphis State University. Data were collected via written surveys and tape recorded interviews. Documents such as grade runners, memos, application forms, and program descriptions were also examined. The questionnaire covered the following topics: (1) source of information on the program; (2) reasons for interest; (3) admission requirements; (4) expectations of the program; (5) course content; (6) problems with coursework completion; (7) course instruction; (8) orientation experience; (9) placements; (10) spring internship activities; (11) mentoring observations and feedback; (12) scheduling; (13) mentor-protege relationship; (14) relationship problems; (15) role of the cohort group; (16) likelihood of a long teaching career; and (17) recommending the program to others. The major perceptions of the MAT program from the Fellows' perspective are summarized and responses to the survey questions are appended. (JD)

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THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE
MAT Program
Cycle 1

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to learn the perspectives of the 1985-86 class of MAT Fellows regarding the MAT program. It is part of the program's evaluation and is intended to provide a framework for understanding the program processes, and a basis upon which to develop strategies to be used in the evaluation of future MAT and fifth year teacher preparation programs.

Data were collected from the twelve MAT Fellows via written surveys and tape recorded interviews within one month after completion of their internships and one-and-one-half months prior to graduation. Documents such as grade runners, memos, application forms and program descriptions were also examined.

Interviews, survey comments and documents were content analyzed and frequencies were calculated from the quantitative data. Reliability of the data is established through triangulation of data from the various sources.

RECRUITMENT

Source of Information About the Program

The newspaper was the primary source from which the fellows learned about the MAT program with nine or 75% of the Fellows reporting this as their first source of information. Other sources mentioned were from professors and friends (see Table A-1, Appendix A).

Reasons for Interest in the Program

When asked what about the MAT program interested them, certification received six responses, expedient certification received seven responses and the stipend received seven responses. Being part of a high quality program only received two responses and convenience received three responses.

Thus, opportunity for certification and availability of stipends seem to be the main attractions to the program (see Table A-2, Appendix A).

Admission Requirements

The Fellows felt that most of the requirements for admission to the MAT program were appropriate. Six (50%) or more of the respondents indicated each of ten criteria was appropriate. Five (41.7%) respondants indicated that they thought evidence of work with children was an inappropriate admission requirement (see Table A-3, Appendix A). Comments indicated that they thought some competent people may not have had opportunities to work with children though they wanted to teach. Ten of the twelve respondents said they thought computer literacy was an inappropriate entrance requirement. Comments indicated that current rapidly changing technology made the requirement inappropriate but at some future time when the technology stabilized it would be an appropriate admission requirement.

Concern was also voiced over the fact that not all admission requirements had been fulfilled by all Fellows prior to entry into the program. Those who had met all requirements prior to entry resented the fact that others were not required to make that effort. Further, there was a perception among the Fellows that not everyone admitted to the program met the stated requirements yet were allowed to remain in the program. They felt this was unfair and tarnished the quality of the program.

The opinion was also voiced that the entrance requirements were flawed because it was possible to admit individuals whom others felt uncomfortable about calling a colleague. They felt that some way must be found to screen out individuals who are academically able yet do not represent the profession well.

Two of the Fellows said that they had applied to and only wanted the Lyndhurst program. They were not admitted to it but were asked to consider the MAT program and were subsequently admitted. Both regretted the decision and though they completed the MAT, not really wanting to take that route was a continual source of aggravation for them. They suggested that persons falling into this category be offered the alternative of waiting one year and reapplying to the Lyndhurst.

It appears that from the Fellows' perspective admission requirements are appropriate with the exception of prior

work with children and computer literacy. They desire stricter enforcement of entrance requirements and improved screening of applicants.

Expectations of the Program

Prior to entering the M.A.T. program the Fellows had various expectations of the college and the program but interview data revealed that they overwhelmingly, except for one individual, thought that the program would be easy. The following statements reflect this view:

> My perceptions were that teacher education was a cakewalk and it might be boring...I had been told by so many teachers that it was Mickey Mouse... I took the attitude that they're paying me to do it because it's so easy

> ...the people I knew who were in education would not be classed in what the best implies. They were overwhelmingly the people who were having to go to Shelby State to finish their literature class. They were people who were taking baby math, who didn't understand algebra.

The Fellows were surprised by the time commitment expected from them as well as the intensity of the program. They had expected to be in class for two or three hours per day and that their total pedagogic courseload would be three or four classes over the course of the fifteen months of the program.

Fellows also expected to learn how to teach via the M.A.T. program. That is, they expected that they would be told how to teach and would receive certification but, as the following comment suggests, some did not expect to learn about educational research nor to have content presented as an academic discipline.

> I wanted to learn how to teach...I was looking to be certified...I certainly had no idea of the content, you know, that there would be any significant content...I didn't have any inkling that I would have to learn how to do educational research.

At least one person did "not want to be an education dummy" but it was the only avenue for becoming a teacher. The dominant view of the Fellows is reflected below:

> I think that a lot of people in liberal arts see the college of education as being sort of a vocational education type thing rather than as a general education and that was my belief too.

There was also a belief among several of the Fellows that teaching is something that can only be learned through doing. Thus, to become a good teacher they felt that one must know the subject content then the rest could be learned through on-the-job training. Consider the following:

> Teaching is an art. It's not something that you can make somebody do. What's important is to have the (content) background...

Thus, upon entry into the MAT program the dominant expectation was that teacher education would be easy, devoid of content, and practically oriented. Education was a requirement to reach the desired goal of teacher certification but not a process eagerly anticipated.

COURSEWORK

Content

Interviews revealed that many of the Fellows felt rusty in their subject content area or felt there were gaps in their content knowledge. They would have liked more coursework in their subject content areas earlier in the program.

Most of the coursework in the program was pedagogic. When asked if there were pedagogic competencies that were needed but not taught six (50%) of the twelve Fellows said yes and four (33.3%) said no (see Table 4, Appendix A). Six (50%) Fellows felt that they lacked pedagogic knowledge that should have been taught and six (50%) felt that no pedagogic knowledge was lacking in the coursework.

Interviews revealed the opinion that the coursework was not relevant enough. The Fellows wanted coursework that would have direct applicability to their classrooms in terms of making content interesting, ways to present specific subject material, how to teach academically talented or slow students, and how to plan and organize time. Criticisms seemed to indicate difficulty in perceiving relationships between the pedagogic classes and what they were doing or expected to do in their public school classrooms. The following excerpt is representative:

> It's difficult to be thinking about neoclassical literature and then have to go to this class where they talk about using newspapers in the classroom and it doesn't pertain to what you're doing...

Some felt that the content from the methods classes was too utopian to be relevant to everyday applications.

> ...a lot of the classes weren't practical enough and I think they should have more instructions on the practical rather than in what could be, (not) some utopian somebody's idea of the way it should be which isn't necessarily mine.

> I don't know, either it was over my head or beyond me or whatever but I couldn't relate to it very well. For one thing, I was in a school system (that has) an incredible lack of any kind of equipment at all. The teacher down here was telling me (I) can make movies and things. Gosh, you can't even find a projector in these schools!

Some content was viewed as valuable but continued to be criticized for being utopian or unrealistic. Micro teaching was such a case:

> Micro teaching was productive because I was able to measure my progress and see, well, what am I doing compared to what he or she's doing and it was fun and interesting. Eventually it bacame very relaxed and we were very supportive towards each other...That's probably good except that it is such an unrealistic setting. I mean teaching in front of twelve forty year olds is not the same, it's so different...it's a pretty unrealistic setting...

In the specialized methods classes Fellows expected that they would learn specific methods with which to teach their content but several were disappointed that they came away without that

information. They felt it was because some professors simply did not teach the content methods. The following excerpts are representative of this perspective:

> They (professors) don't really have teaching in mind in their instructing. They have (the subject) matter in mind and, so there, again you don't get any kind of methods in the course.

> Memphis State School of Education taught me how to conform to the limits that the system was putting on (us) but as far as teaching kids (math, language, etc), no.

Others felt that the methods classes were not specific enough about what methods to use.

> A million times people said use a variety of teaching methods but they never said (what to do) if you want to teach the difference between a preterit and a perfect. It was never specific enough...

But some Fellows believed that what they had hoped to learn in the coursework could not be learned except through experience.

> Classroom management, I couldn't get those suckers to stay in their seats for love nor money. I wanted to lay out a machine gun on my desk. That was something that, just because of my personality, was very difficult and I don't think a book or class or simulations could have (taught it).

Finally, regarding criticisms of pedagogic course content to teach, some Fellows felt the coursework simply had no content. They felt the material was watered down and the text books were too repetitive.

> The main difficulty I had with the whole thing was the content of education courses...they were not difficult. They were an endurance course...There was not very much there in terms of substance. In fact, when I was filling out the intent to graduate form and had to list all of the courses we had in this program, I could not even remember what some of those courses were from the titles.

Though they were critical of the coursework, many Fellows wondered whether the focus of education is so different from their content field that they could not view the coursework objectively or positively. The following statement typifies the musings:

> ...I know I may be biased by being from a...background used to, you know, facts. Learning facts and formulas and figures and that's just not the nature of education...maybe I'm being a little unfair if I were to criticize it for being fluff instead of fact. You know, it's a different feeling.

Most positive comments about the coursework were in terms of facts acquired. Thus, the historical portion of the foundations class, the adolescence class, and the special education class received many positive comments because of the factual information the Fellows felt they acquired. One individual summarized positive feelings about the coursework in this way:

> I'd say it was pretty good. You know, I've got a big file box of notes. I mean, I've obviously got something from it. It was pretty good.

In sum, Fellows wanted the course content to be directly applicable to classroom practice. Their expressed concerns indicated that:

1) There was difficulty among the Fellows in relating course content to classroom application.

2) Content was viewed as utopian or unrealistic.

3) Methods were not taught in some of the specialized methods courses.

4) Some believed that education courses have no content to teach or that the content does not have enough depth.

Those Fellows who expressed satisfaction with the course content stated their opinion in terms of facts acquired and ability to compare their progress with others.

Problems With Coursework Completion

When asked if they encounted problems with completing pedagogic course requirements ten (83.3%) of the Fellows said yes and two (16.7%) said no (see Table 4-A, Appendix A). Many problems seemed to occur in the Fall semester when Fellows were taking classes, beginning their teaching experiences in the public schools, and planning their theses.

> You know, I had coursework that I was trying to keep up with and lesson plans that I felt like I needed to write down everything that I wanted to say or I would forget. So

> every night, trying to think of what you're going to say for whatever. It was a horrible drain on my time and then I would put off course work until the night before it was due. It was awful.

One person mentioned having to take incompletes that semester for the first time in her life and finishing course assignments during Christmas break. One reason for the incompletes related to problems some Fellows had completing several major tasks at once. Several took incompletes for the research course in order to complete their theses proposals. While problems with managing several major tasks at once was part of the problem another factor was miscommunication about the importance of the proposals within the context of the entire MAT program. As one Fellow explained it:

> ...it took everybody all the way through Christmas to get their proposals and some of them weren't gonna do it. They said it was 'only so many points in the course, I'm not gonna do it.' The director had to send them a letter telling them, you know, I hate to tell you this but it's part of the program.

Thus, problems related to completion of the coursework seem to be related to inability of the Fellows to handle several major tasks at once and miscommunications about the importance of the thesis proposal.

Course Instruction

When asked if they felt the methods of instruction were appropriate in the pedagogic courses six (50%) Fellows said yes and six said no (50%). The most frequent criticism was that time was wasted. A common perception was that most of what was taught could have been taught in half the time. While activities such as role plays, simulations and clarifying stories were enjoyed and mentioned as positive aspects of the pedagogic instruction they were also criticized for being time wasted and impingements on more valuable activities. The following excerpt is representative:

> We had one of these meetings and we spent a long time talking about cooking cabbage and I was trying to get a paper done and I really thought, you know, can I go to the library please?

Thus, some Fellows did not understand the value of instructional activities other than direct conveying of factual information.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Fellows cycled through four teaching placements during Fall and Spring semesters: two three-week placements, one six-week placement and a semester-long internship.

Orientation

Six (50%) of the twelve Fellows indicated that they were orientated to all of their teaching experiences via large group meetings, discussion semimars, on site observations, and conferences with their mentors. Two (16.7%) Fellows indicated that they were oriented via various combinations of the above experiences but not all. One (8.3%) Fellow experienced some combination of the orientation experiences for the mini experiences and the Fall internship but no orientation for the Spring internship. Three (25%) Fellows said they did not have any of the above orientation experiences for any of their teaching placements. Thus, it appears that all but three Fellows were oriented to their teaching placements.

Fellows rated the orientations to their teaching experiences using a four point Likert type scale where 4 was excellent and 1 was poor (see Table A-5, Appendix A). The mean score for the ratings of orientations to

each of the three placements was three (3.0) or good. Thus, it appears that the Fellows were well satisfied with the way they were oriented for their teaching experiences.

Interviews revealed that while the Fellows knew what to expect from their teaching experiences, their classroom mentors initially did not always know what type of experiences to provide as the following comment illustrates:

> I would show up the first day and the person would be expecting me. The principal would tell them that I was coming but they didn't have any idea of what I was supposed to do there, whether I was just supposed to watch them, whether I was supposed to take over the class or, you know, they just didn't know and that was true throughout...One of the schools I went to for instance, where the breakdown was I don't know, but I was supposed to be assigned to one teacher and kind of follow him through the half day and get to teach a couple classes later on. Well, they had the idea that I was supposed to be assigned to four different teachers. They had assigned me to four different ones. I had to get (Memphis State personnel) to come and explain to the principal...the whole thing was that they didn't understand...what it was they were going to have (to do)...

Thus, while the Fellows understood their own roles in the schools they suggested that the public school participants, particularly the classroom mentors, be better oriented with regard to the program, why it exists, the classroom mentor's role in it, and what they are expected to do.

Placements

There were a total of 51 teaching placements made for the students in the program. 48 were planned placements for mini-experiences, student teaching and internship. Three additional placements were made for the internship because of problems encountered by three students in their initial internship placements. Two of the placement shifts were due to a mismatch of classroom mentors and proteges. Placement shifts solved the problem. One resulted from teaching problems encountered by the protege and the change in placement was an attempt to provide a different mentor and school to enhance the protege's chances for teaching success. That protege was ultimately successful.

Other, more minor problems encountered by the Fellows in their teaching placements related to lack of understanding of the program by classroom mentors. This is dealt with in more detail in the section on internship problems.

Seven Fellows responded on the survey that they did not have problems with their teaching placements. Five said they had problems with their placements and four were satisfied that the problems were resolved.

The fifth individual's problem was the perception that the classroom mentor was expecting too much. The Fellow had not received the final evaluation for the internship at the time of completing the questionnaire and therefore did not know if the internship had been deemed successfully completed. Subsequently, a satisfactory evaluation was received and the problem was resolved.

Thus, the program seems to deal with placement problems to the satisfaction of the Fellows.

Spring Internship

The internship was the high point of the program for the Fellows. When interviewed, seven of the twelve interns repeatedly attributed what they had learned to having been in school classrooms and either observing master teachers or teaching their own classes. Survey data revealed that eight of the Fellows rated the internship experience to be excellent, three rated it good, and one rated it fair. Reflective of what they liked about the internship is the following statement:

> ...actually getting out there and just doing it...We were at the school for seven hours a day and teaching two classes. We had lots of time to prepare and really think about what we were doing. I did a lot of experimentation...everyday I was trying something a little different, just trying to figure out what worked best for me and that was a neat opportunity that I probably won't ever have again. To have that much time and

to focus on fine tuning my own style was a real neat part of doing...

Activities

Most Fellows participated in the full range of school related activities during their internship. Four (33.3%) Fellows attended professional meetings. This is the only category where fewer than seven (58.3%) Fellows participated (see Table A-6, Appendix A). Only one of those seven who did not participate indicated a desire to have participated more. Thus, most Fellows did not seem to value or regret missing opportunities to attend professional meetings.

While all Fellows said they used school equipment, six Fellows (50%) said they would have liked to use more. No other activity category had this high of a positive response rate for desiring more participation. But it should be noted that four (33.3%) Fellows responded that they would have liked more participation in parent conferences and school sponsored activities in the afternoons, evenings, or weekends.

Mentoring

Throughout the internship two types of mentors worked with the Fellows: a classroom mentor who taught in the same school and content area as the Fellow and a pedagogic mentor who was a professor in the College of Education. Their key roles were to observe the Fellows

teach and provide feedback about the observed lessons for the purpose of improving their teaching ability.

Observations

Fellows indicated that their pedagogic mentors tended to observe them once every three or four weeks (see Table A-7, Appendix A) with a few being observed less frequently or at varying intervals that were agreeable to the Fellow. Most Fellows were satisfied with whatever interval they were observed. Those who were observed less frequently interpreted this as the mentor having confidence in their teaching competence.

Pedagogic mentor observations were announced and unannounced. Usually there was no problem with either but one Fellow suggested that care be taken that the classroom mentor not be too inconvenienced:

> ...the mentor should be very careful that the teacher wasn't being made to accomodate them but they, in fact, had to talk to the teacher at the supervising (classroom) teacher's convenience...Well, (the pedagogic mentor) would say (to the Fellow) go sit with her class, she needs to talk to me about this. It might not be a good time for someone just to be babysitting. She might have specific things she needs to be doing all morning for them (the students). In my estimatiion the classroom teacher is doing us a favor and so she should be accorded (consideration).

From the Fellows' perspective, classroom mentors clustered into two groups with regard to observations. They either observed their Fellows once every day to

once each week or they observed at other varying intervals. Most Fellows felt the intervals at which their classroom mentor observed them were appropriate.

When classroom mentor observations were very infrequent they were commonly the result of scheduling conflicts because the classroom mentors sometimes taught their own classes during the same periods that the Fellows taught thus eliminating opportunities to observe without neglecting their own classes.

Of the two Fellows who were dissatisfied with the classroom mentors' observation intervals one had problems during the internship and the other may have had some problems. The first individual was observed once every few days but felt that the classroom mentor should have monitored more closely and that there should have been a "deeper control relationship with the classroom mentor-teacher." This Fellow wanted more structure and more monitoring of teaching.

The other Fellow said that the classroom mentor observed two to three times per week during the Fall but never observed in the Spring until "the day before the final exam when no instruction (only review) was taking place." Thus, a lower rating was received in classroom management than the Fellow felt was deserved because it was based on that one visit. However, the Fellow wasn't completely displeased,

> I was turned loose with complete autonomy and I loved it. I appreciated the independence, but it worked against me when it came time for evaluation.

Feedback

Scheduling. After observing a Fellow teach the mentors usually informed the Fellow about how the teaching went. Seven (58.3%) Fellows indicated that their pedagogic mentors always provided this feedback immediately after observing a lesson (see Table A-8, Appendix A). Three (25%) indicated that their pedagogic mentors sometimes provided feedback immediately after the lesson or sometime during the week of the observed lesson; when feedback occurred depended primarily upon the schedules of the involved individuals.

Six (50%) Fellows indicated that feedback was received from classroom mentors on the day of the observation with one of those regularly receiving feedback immediately after the observation because they both had a planning period at that time. Two (16.7%) received feedback sometime during the week of the observation and three (25%) said they received feedback when necessary or convenient. At least one Fellow and classroom mentor pair did not have the same planning periods so getting and giving feedback was a problem; they snatched time here and there for that purpose.

One Fellow indicated that no feedback was received from the classroom mentor during the internship. This individual said that feedback was received two or three times each week during the six-week student teaching but no observations or feedback occurred Spring semester.

Description. As presented in Table 1, Fellows were favorable about their mentors' feedback. But they described their pedagogic mentor's feedback as more encouraging and supportive and their classroom mentors' feedback as more constructive, helpful, specific and instructive. Thus, the purposes served by each type of mentor feedback were complimentary rather than redundant or reinforcing.

Table 1

Description of mentor feedback

	Pedagogic		Classroom	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
instructive - not instructive	1.25	1.38	1.75	1.215
specific - general	2.25	.965	1.83	1.19
encouraging - not encouraging	1.833	.937	2.083	1.379
helpful - not helpful	2.33	1.155	1.833	.835
constructive - not constructive	2.41	1.379	1.917	1.24
supportive - not supportive	1.5	.674	2.083	1.31

*scale ranges 1 to 5

Activities

As Table 2 indicates, Fellows reported that pedagogic mentors were more likely to engage in the selected mentoring activities than were the classroom mentors. Exceptions were: meeting regularly with the Fellow, monitoring Fellow activities, and assisting with the state evaluation.

There were no activities in which all classroom mentors engaged. It is interesting to note that no Fellows indicated that their classroom mentors introduced them to faculty/staff, parents, etc. and only two Fellows felt their classroom mentors helped with planning instruction or helped locate instructional technology.

TABLE 1

MAT

Summary of activities in which mentors engaged in their roles
N = 12

	Pedagogic		Classroom	
	f	%	f	%
Assisted in planning for instruction	8/66.7		2/16.7	
Shared knowledge about instructional strategies, techniques, etc.	11/91.7		9/75	
Shared knowledge of school & system policies, practices, etc.	11/91.7		5/41.7	
Scheduled regular meeting to discuss topics of mutual interest	3/25		5/41.7	
Regularly monitored your activities	7/58.3		10/83.3	
Introduced you to faculty/staff, parent and community people, system personnel	9/75		6/5	
Observed & evaluated your teaching	11/91.7		11/91.7	
Advised about potential problems	11/91.7		8/66.7	
Shared info about upcoming school events	11/91.7		3/25	
Served as confidant annd advisor	10/83.3		6/66.7	
Helped solve personal problems	4/33.3		2/16.7	
Served as advocate when needed	8/66.7		3/25	
Defended you	6/50		2/16.7	
Shared knowledge and nuances about working the school system	11/91.7		7/58.3	
Modeled exemplary instruction	9/75		3/25	
Assisted in locating instructional technology	5/41.7		2/16.7	
Shared knowledge about classroom mgmt	12/100		5/41.7	
Assisted in undergoing state/systems evaluation processes	8/66.7		9/75	
Assisted with program related frustrations and issues	7/58.3		6/5	

Assigned Relationships

When asked to rate their mentors in the areas of comfort, helpfulness and general success of the relationship Fellows rated both pedagogic and classroom mentors positively in all three categories (see Table A-9, Appendix A). Fellows felt more comfortable with their classroom mentors than with the pedagogic mentors and perceived relationships with classroom mentors to be more successful than with the pedagogic mentors. However, Fellows reported that relationships with pedagogic mentors were more helpful than relationships with classroom mentors. The following individual suggests a reason:

> (The pedagogic mentor's) job is to keep the fire under me stoked up...more of a person who is in charge of you getting all of these bases covered. (The classroom mentor) is a teaching peer. I'm more than a student teacher, I'm a real teacher for these two hours a day. We're peers even though (the classroom mentor) has more experience.
>
> (With the pedagogic mentor) I am in more of an employee-employer relationship. So it's not that there is anything wrong with the way (the pedagogic mentor) mentored me. It was the nature of the relationship.

Fellows were asked to identify attributes from a pre-selected list that their mentors possessed which they felt contributed to the success of the mentoring relationship. As Table 3

TABLE 3

Summary of mentor attributes that contributed to a successful mentoring relationship
N = 12

	Pedagogic n/%	Classroom n/%
Human relations skills	9/75	12/100
Professional preparation	8/66.7	9/75
Personal philosophy and attitudes	5/41.7	12/100
Personal interest in careers of beginning teachers	10/83.3	9/75
Competence in problem solving	5/41.7	8/66.7
Understanding students interests and needs	6/50	9/75
Understanding the complexities of teaching and learning	10/83.3	8/66.7
Skill in relating theory to practice	6/50	8/66.7
Competence in planning and organizing	8/66.7	9/75
Communication competencies	7/58.3	9/75
Breadth of subject understanding	6/50	9/75
Compatable personal background	8/66.7	7/58.3
Understanding of schools	6/50	10/83.3
Confidence as a role model	9/75	9/75
Committment to the education profession	9/75	11/91.7
Past experiences as a classroom teacher	9/75	11/91.7
Accessibility	4/33.3	10/83.3

indicates, none of these attributes were possessed by all mentors but personal philosophy and attitudes was an attribute possessed by all classroom mentors. Fellows felt that most attributes were possessed by the majority of their mentors. However, classroom mentors were perceived to be most lacking in human relation skills and pedagogic mentors were perceived to be most lacking in breadth of subject understanding and accessibility.

Interviews revealed that lack of breadth of subject understanding by pedagogic mentors was bothersome to the Fellows. Some pedagogic mentors commented to their proteges, in effect, that they (mentor) did not understand anything about the content taught during an observation but then proceeded to critique the teaching technique. When this occurred, the Fellows could not understand how their teaching could be criticized when the mentor did not understand the content.

Interviews revealed additional factors which contributed to good mentoring relationships, particularly with classroom mentors. Most frequently mentioned was that the mentor should demonstrate trust in the protege by allowing autonomy in teaching. Consider the following statement:

> She (classroom mentor) gave me a lot of autonomy especially. I really think she did a super job. She kinda hovered around closely for the first few weeks and kinda helped me out alot and then gradually she just sorta faded away. She was real good at it...until towards the end of the year she taught her classes and I taught mine and I was very independent, so she was good at it.

It should be noted that the gaining of autonomy was gradual. When proteges were expected to be independent immediately and were not observed they liked not being monitored but also felt the mentor was noninstructive.

Flexibility or the ability to work with anybody was an additional attribute that proteges valued from their classroom mentors:

> I think (my mentor) is a pretty good ideal because she's the kind of person who's extremely flexible. If she had gotten somebody completely different from me she would have been able to flex her personality or change so that she could accommodate that person...
>
> This woman had different classes. She would treat them all differently. She could change her mood according to the kids, into what was expected and what they needed. Some (classes) were very structured, some were not and she was comfortable being down with the kids...

Knowing lots of teaching techniques and willingness to share them were also mentioned as good attributes for mentors to have:

> I would think a mentor would be someone who would give you ideas to try and have a little bag of tricks that they could suggest to you...that's one

> of the things that the other teacher did, 'Hey, this is something you can try,' or 'I don't believe in this, try this,' and things like that. She was more helpful as was the one I observed. she asked for suggestions, she gave suggestions. I learned a lot..
>
> ...(the mentor) didn't have a bag of tricks. (the mentor's) idea was to go in and present the material. It worked well with advanced (classes) but with nineth graders I don't feel that was effective...I don't feel that (I was) mentored.

But timing of suggestions was important to the proteges. Sometimes mentors chose to make suggestions at times that the protege thought were inappropriate such as in the middle of a class while it is being taught:

> Sometimes (the mentor) would do what I think was unforgiveable and that's interrupt me during the class to point out things that I needed to do differently...

Thus, attributes identified by proteges as contributing to successful mentoring relationships were: a demonstration of trust in the protege's teaching ability, providing a gradual increase in teaching autonomy, flexibility, knowledge of teaching techniques and willingness to share them, and sensitivity to appropriate times to make suggestions or provide feedback.

Non-assigned Mentoring. Survey data indicated that Fellows did not tend to establish mentoring relationships other than those that were assigned.

Individual interviews revealed that ten of the twelve Fellows did establish relationships that fulfilled some mentoring responsibilities that were not provided by assigned mentors. The majority of non-assigned mentor-like relationships were with other teachers whom the Fellows met during planning periods in the teacher's lounge as in these cases:

> It was one of those things where a bunch of teachers sitting around in the teachers' lounge and they would just offer help. I had free periods with a lot of them and I'd be in the teachers' lounge doing something...they'd offer their suggestions. As a matter of fact, when I left there and some of them found out I would be teaching English, I'm not certified in English, I had a lot of them come and bring me some of their materials and offer me stuff.
>
> A young math teacher helped me a lot with where you get supplies, you can use the copy machine, you can go down to guidance and find out about this child, ask for Miss So-and-so. My mentoring teacher was teaching. These teachers, this was their time off but my teacher would be teaching.

Others of these relationships resulted from observing in classrooms. The following description is typical:

> I had a lot of free time during the internship, four periods per day, and I did visit other classrooms. One, a chemistry teacher, taught chemistry and physics. I asked him if I could come sit in his class and he said 'sure'. He gave me textbooks. Actually gave, 'You may have these to keep'. They were extras that he had and he talked to me a long time about teaching science and

> told me who to talk to at the county level and professors at Memphis State and he had requirements, and on and on. We just talked about that alot. We just talked about subject matter generally.

Several Fellows felt that the feedback received by the subject area supervisors of the school systems was very useful. In at least one case the Fellow felt a mentoring relationship could have developed but the meeting came too late in the school year.

> You know who I think might have eventually become one but didn't? We really didn't have enough time to let it develop, was the (subject) advisor who did my evaluation. He was kind of a fatherly type who had taught twenty years in the system and gave me some really good tips on practical things that I put into effect. I didn't even see him until May so I think had I met him sooner that would have been good.

Thus, it seems that while proteges had successful relationships with their assigned mentors when they were not getting needed information they developed other willing, mentor-like sources.

Problems

While the internship was viewed by the Fellows as the high point of the program, there were factors which caused problems for some individuals. The most frequently mentioned

problem was that the school people did not seem to understand their roles in relation to the intern.

> I don't think they were ever given a list of - during the semester you need to do the following things for your student or your MAT Fellow - and if a list came out I think it was after we had already established a routine. Even the principal did not know what our status was. Are we interim teachers or substitute teachers? I wasn't sure. I knew what I had been told, 'I think I'm gonna get a probationary certificate...' and I felt kind of foolish and I felt that it made the program look unprepared, not to be able to answer those questions.

In addition, at least one mentor had not been asked if she wanted an intern but had one assigned to her which was a less than ideal way to begin an internship:

> When I went there she did not know, she did not know the difference between me and another student teacher. But she also indicated that she really wasn't given much choice. I think she resented that a little bit. The principal kind of said, 'You are going to have a student."

Because teachers didn't seem to know what to expect, sometimes students were not informed either and this caused problems for some Fellows:

> The kids don't know if you are gonna come around. They're used to student teachers who come for six weeks and leave. I even had, 'She told us you were gonna be here a month and you've been here four.' They know that you are not really a teacher in that school and I think you have to overcome that. It's hard.

In one instance the mentor was reluctant to give up classes to the protege to teach and the protege did not feel prepared to teach the advanced classes assigned to that mentor. Thus, the internship was not satisfying to the protege who, in retrospect, felt that it was not a good internship placement.

For some, not having a space of their own to work at and store materials, like a desk, caused hardships especially since they were at school all day but teaching only two periods:

> We were there all day long and I did find that to be a very peculiar situation to be in. I had a lot to do in preparing for my classes at Memphis State but on the other hand, (I wonder) how I was viewed by other teachers while I was hanging around a lot. I didn't feel comfortable staying with my teacher all that time. For one thing it's just incredibly boring to sit through four lectures a day. I didn't feel really comfortable flopping in other seats in other classrooms all the time and then here I was a lounge lizard in the teachers' lounge. You know, it was hard to know what to do all day long.
>
> I had to carry everything with me too. All the material I was grading, everything I was preparing for the next day, six textbooks because I had two different preparations and three textbooks for each class. It was a monumental task just to get from one place to the next without making three or four trips...

Thus, the most serious problem within the internship, mentioned by the students, was the classroom mentors' lack of knowledge of their

roles and responsibilities. Other problems mentioned were unwillingness of some classroom mentors to give up their classes to proteges and lack of space to call home.

COHORT GROUP

Interviews revealed that the cohort group became a positive and negative factor in the program. On the positive side, at least five Fellows said that the group was a major positive quality of the program. It was a mechanism for establishing friendships and providing support. The following quote summarizes this feeling:

> If I had to go back and say will I do this again I might because of the friendships that I have made. I exclude the men not because I'm not friends with the men. It's just that the women in this group, nine out of twelve, are females. I have had relationships and established relationships with several of them that I think will continue a lifetime.

For at least one person, the group was the primary factor for remaining in the program:

> The other people in the program, the women especially, are just like sisters to me. I mean we are so close and they were gonna be supportive of whatever decision I made. But to tell you the truth I don't think that the MAT program was right for me. But the thought of not being around them really was the dominant factor in deciding to stay in. Nothing was so bad that it was worth giving up these people and quitting...They were just so, so supportive.

Others, however, considered being a part of the group to be a problem. The group had a reputation for griping and individuals undeservedly gained that

reputation. They felt the group developed a bad reputation early in the program because of a few individuals. The following quotation is representative of this view:

> It happened the first week and I could name two people if you want them. When I'm teaching I certainly don't like somebody acting like a fool out in my class, just being obnoxious. So, you know, I think that it should be fairly common sense that when you're sitting in someone elses class you don't act like an idiot and some people did the first week of school. I was horrified, other people were horrified. I apologized to one teacher, you know, and I think that, I'm sure that, we got a bad name because of a couple people...
>
> It was embarrassing how some people in our group acted at times...You just don't tell people that the area that you know they did their dissertation in is ridiculous...I resent the fact that two or three people can screw it up for the rest of us.

Some said they felt peer pressure to conform to the antagonistic attitude of a few. Others felt that the quality control groups fostered the griping nature of the group because they "always turned into gripe sessions." As two individuals put it:

> A noble idea but (it) gave some people the license to think of things to bitch about
>
> (they) always turned into gripe sessions. Americans can't do it as well as the Japanese

Others felt a group vs the world mentality developed which was not good.

Thus, the cohort group was a life support system for some while it was a burden to bear for others.

LIKELIHOOD OF A LONG TEACHING CAREER

When asked about the likelihood of having a long teaching career in the future seven (58.3%) said it was very likely, two (8.3%) said not very likely and three (33.3%) did not know.

RECOMMENDING THE PROGRAM

When asked if they would recommend the MAT program to others six (50%) responded yes, three (25%) responded no and three (25%) did not know. One reservation about the program was that it was too intense and therefore should not be recommended for individuals who have a family with children. The view was also expressed that persons whose major is in a low-demand teaching field be discouraged from enrolling.

SUMMARY

Following are the major perceptions of the MAT program from the Fellows' perspective.

1. The primary source of initial information about the MAT program was from the newspaper.

2. Opportunity for certification and stipends were the main attractions to the program.

3. Regarding admission requirements, students wanted:

   a. Stricter enforcement of admission requirements

   b. screening of applicants beyond academic ability

4. Fellows felt the following admission requirements are inappropriate:

   a. prior work with children

   b. computer literacy

5. Most of the Fellows in this cycle expected the program to be easy, devoid of content and very practical

6. Course content was criticized for being:

   a. utopian and unrealistic

   b. weak in teaching methods

   c. lacking content

7. Fellows had difficulty with:

   a. understanding the value of instruction that was not direct conveying of facts

   b. relating the course content to practice

8. Most problems with course completion related to completing the thesis prospectus.

9. Students were well oriented to their roles and responsibilities in their teaching placements but many of the public school participants were not.

10. Fellows viewed the internship as the most valuable component of the MAT program.

11. Fellows felt they participated in a full range of internship activities. Requests were voiced for more participation in:

    a. use of school equipment (50%)
    b. parent conferences (33%)
    c. school sponsored after school activities (33%)

12. Proteges were satisfied with mentor observation intervals.

13. The mode for observation intervals was:

    a. classroom mentors - once every day or once a week
    b. pedagogic mentors - once every three or four weeks

14. The mode for feedback timing was:

    a. classroom mentors - sometime during the day of the observed lesson
    b. pedagogic mentors - immediately after an observed lesson

15. Pedagogic mentor feedback was viewed as more encouraging and supportive

16. Classroom mentor feedback was viewed as more constructive, helpful, specific and instructive.

17. Classroom mentors were viewed as more likely than pedagogic mentors to meet regularly with the protege, monitor protege activities, and assist with state evaluations.

18. No classroom mentors were reported to have introduced their proteges to faculty, staff, etc and two helped with planning instruction.

19. Fellows were concerned over the seeming lack of breadth of subject understanding demonstrated by some pedagogic mentors.

20. Factors identified as contributing to good mentoring relationships were:

a. demonstration of trust through gradual granting of teaching autonomy
b. flexibility
c. knowledge of and willingness to share teaching techniques
d. sensitivity to appropriate times to make suggestions or provide feedback

21. Mentor-like relationships were developed with other teachers in the schools. These were likely to develop through contacts in the faculty lounge and through classroom observations.

22. Primary internship problems related to school personnel having inadequate information about their roles and lack of a private space to work.

23. The cohort group was viewed as a life support system as well as a burden

24. 58% of the Fellows expect to have long teaching careers

25. 50% of the Fellows would recommend the program to others

Appendix

TABLE A-1

MAT
How did you learn about the program?
N = 12

Source	Frequency	%
friend	2	16.
professor	3	25
pamphlet/ brochure	0	0
newspaper	9	75
radio/tv	0	0
other	3	25

TABLE A-2

MAT
Why were you interested in the program?
N = 12

Reason	frequency	%
Part of a quality program	2	16.7
Stipend	7	58.3
Certification	6	50
Expedient certification	7	58.3
Convenience	3	25
Other	2	16.7

TABLE A-3

MAT
How appropriate was each admission requirement?
N = 12

	App *	Inapp **	Don't Know	missing
	n/%_____	n/%_____	n/%_____	n/%_____
Completion of academic major	12/100			
Completion of general studies	6/50	1/8.3	3/25	2/16.7
Above average quality point average	9/75	1/8.3	1/8.3	1/8.3
Admission to MSU graduate school	11/91.7		1/8.3	
Miller Analogies/GRE test scores	10/83.3	1/8.3		
Above average performance on basic skills test	10/83.3		2/16.7	
Above average performance on NTE	9/75.0		2/16.7	1/8.3
Satisfactory recommendations	10/83.3		2/16.7	
Prior work with children	3/25	5/41.7	4/33.3	
Oral and written communication proficiency	12/100			
Computer literacy	2/16.7	6/50	4/33.3	
Personal interview	12/100			

* app = appropriate

** inapp = inappropriate

TABLE A-4

MAT
Regarding pedagogic coursework
N = 12

	Yes n %	No n %	Don't Know n %	Missing n %
Were there competencies you needed that were not taught?	6/50	4/33.3	1/8.3	1/8.3
Did you encounter problems in completion of course requirements?	10/83.3	2/16.7		
Were the problems resolved?	7/58.3	5/41.7		
Was there knowledge that should have been taught but was not?	6/50		6/50	

TABLE A-5

MAT
Student ratings for orientation to teaching experiences
N = 12

	4 Excellent n %	3 Good n %	2 Fair n %	1 Poor n %	Missing n %	$\bar{X}$	SD
Mini experience	5/41.7		3/25	1/8.3	3/25	3.0	1.225
Fall internship	5/41.7	3/25	2/16.7			3.3	.833
Spring internship	5/41.7	2/16.7	1/8.3	2/16.7	2/16.7	3.0	1.247

TABLE A-6

MAT
Frequency of participation in internship activities
N = 12

	Participated			Liked more Participation		
	yes n/%	no n/%	missing n/%	yes n/%	no n/%	missing n/%
classroom teaching	12/100			2/16.7	5/41.6	5/41.7
faculty meetings	10/83.3	1/8.3	1/8.3	2/16.7	7/58.3	3/25.0
professional meetings	4/33.3	7/58.3	1/8.3	2/16.7	7/58.3	3/25.0
inservice	9/75.0	3/25		3/25	5/41.6	4/33.3
homeroom	10/83.3	2/16.7		2/16.7	7/58.3	3/25.0
co-curricular activities	7/58.3	3/25	2/16.7	3/25	5/41.6	4/33.3
parent conference	9/75	3/25		4/33.3	5/41.6	3/25.0
observed mentor teach	11/91.7		1/8.3	1/8.3	7/58.3	4/33.3
utilized school equipment, facilities	12/100			6/50	2/16.7	4/33.3
school sponsored activities in afternoon, weekends, evenings	10/83.3	2/16.7		4/33.3	5/41.6	3/25.0

TABLE 4-7

MAT
At what intervals did your mentor monitor your teaching?
N = 12

	Pedagogic		Classroom	
	app* n/%	inapp** n/%	app* n/%	inapp** n/%
1/ day				
1/ few days			2/16.7	1/8.3
1/ week			2/16.7	
1/ 2 weeks	2/16.7	1/16.7		
1/ 3 weeks	3/25			
1/ month	3/25			
1/ six weeks	1/16.7			
other	2/16.7		5/41.7	1/8.3
missing			1/8.3	

* appropriate
** inappropriate

TABLE 4-6

MAT
Timing of mentor feedback
N = 12

	Pedagogic	Classroom
	n/%	n/%
Immediately after obs	7/58.3	1/8.3
End of day of obs		2/16.7
Sometime during week of obs	1/8.3	2/16.7
No feedback		1/8.3
When necessary or convenient		3/25
Sometimes end of day Sometimes after lesson		3/25
Sometimes after lesson Sometimes during week of lesson	3/25	
Other	1/8.3	

TABLE A-9

MAT

Rating of student-mentor relationship

	Pedagogic		Classroom	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
*comfortable - stressful	1.833	1.115	1.75	1.215
helpful - not helpful	1.667	.778	1.833	1.193
successful - unsuccessful	1.727	.786	1.667	1.231

* scaled 1 to 5